

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS SKAGIT TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Workshop

March 16, 2018

The Skagit Transit Board of Directors met in a Board Workshop on Friday, March 16, 2018. Board Chair Ken Dahlstedt called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

Present: Mayor Lauri Gere, City of Anacortes; Mayor Jill Boudreau and Councilperson Mary Hudson, City of Mount Vernon; Skagit County Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt; and Skagit County Commissioner Lisa Janicki.

Skagit Transit Representatives: Dale O'Brien, Executive Director; Motoko Pleasant, Manager of Finance and Administration; Penny Roodzant, Human Resources Manager; Al Schaner, Maintenance & Facilities Manager; Chris Chidley, IT Manager; Marcia Smith, Grants Administrator; Brad Windler, Planner; Joe Macdonald, Interim Operations Manager; Whitney Fernandes, Clerk to the Board.

Members of the Public: None

General Update: Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit needs to consider use of reserve funds to support the rapid growth and internal needs that are present. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit staff would report on the needs of every department, some of which were not in the 2018 budget.

Mr. O'Brien stated that Skagit Transit does not have the office space necessary for current staffing levels, which are still growing. Mr. O'Brien reported there were 17 drivers employed with Skagit Transit in 1995 and there are currently 88. Ms. Gere inquired if all those drivers were full time, Mr. Macdonald stated there are currently 8 drivers in training, so there will be 96 drivers in total at the current time, and 70% of them are full time. Mr. O'Brien stated there are 142 employees and the agency is still growing. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit has built itself back since the recession to the point where everything that is currently on the road can be sustained, so there is no threat of a cut in service. Mr. O'Brien presented the organization chart that shows the size and structure of the company.

Mr. O'Brien presented a slide show with photos of the buildings and facilities that make up Skagit Transit, including the current Maintenance, Operations and Administration (MOA) building –built in 1998, Skagit Station acquired in 2005 and remodeled in 2013 to add the Deli space. Mr. O'Brien reported that since the recent improvements at Skagit Station the deli business is doing better. Mr. O'Brien continued with Chuckanut Park and Ride built in 2011 – 368 parking spaces, South Mount Vernon Park and Ride – 365 parking spaces, March Point Park and Ride which is leased from Shell Refinery and is the location where Skagit Transit makes connections with Island Transit, Sedro Woolley Park and Ride, and Alger Park and Ride. Mr. O'Brien showed photos of the new base that was purchased approximately two years ago.

Mr. O'Brien reported the number of fixed route ridership to date since 2013 is 18,032,120 and referenced the FR Ridership chart where information such as mileage and revenue information can be found as well as a chart that maps the growth. Mr. O'Brien reported the paratransit service ridership since 2013 is 1,309,547 passengers and is continuing to grow. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit will be bringing a request for two more paratransit routes to the Board in order to keep up with the demand.

Mr. O'Brien displayed a timeline for the construction of the new base stating Skagit Transit is currently settling the last components of the contract. Mr. O'Brien stated the notice to proceed will occur March 29, with the first pre-design work session beginning in April, and the second pre-design work session will be in May. The budget will be set in June and Skagit Transit will report back to the Board with the progress in July of 2018. Mr. O'Brien stated the schematic design is currently at 30%, in September the preliminary design will be 60% complete, construction design will be 90% complete, and Skagit Transit will be obtaining building permits. Mr. O'Brien stating the construction documents will be 100% completed early 2019, with bidding beginning February or March 2019. The construction award will be in April 2019 and projected completion will be April of 2020. Ms. Janicki inquired if there would in fact be a year's worth of construction. Mr. O'Brien stated the consultant informed Skagit Transit that the time frame would encompass the worst case scenario with regard to weather. Ms. Janicki questioned if there was a way to phase the construction so that the in ground work could be completed in order to get some functionality out of the building, stating April 2020 seems like a long time from now and asked what could be done to get the work done sooner than projected. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit is currently waiting on grant funding, with two applications sent out, the Tiger Grant, which Skagit Transit did not receive, and Grant 5339 for buses and bus facilities, which Skagit Transit should be getting a response soon. Mr. O'Brien stated when Skagit Transit meets with the consultant in the end of March they will discuss phasing in work projects, which have been discussed previously with a dependency upon funds through grants or using funds in the reserves. Mr. O'Brien stated that if Skagit Transit has the option to begin the retrofitting of the building or getting the acreage prepped, Skagit Transit would be more than happy to get started on construction faster than planned for. Ms. Boudreau expressed her support in phasing the construction in and getting into the new facility faster. Mr. Dahlstedt confirmed that funding is what is holding Skagit Transit back from earlier completion of the new facility. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit will look into options available through local funds to get started earlier and discuss this with the consultant.

Financial Recap

Ms. Pleasant stated Skagit Transit is still working on closing out the yearend report, so the information being shared with the board is not the total for the year, however it is close.

Ms. Pleasant reviewed 2017 revenues stating actual fare revenue was \$868,758.74 which is 4.5% less than what was budgeted for, and sales tax revenue was \$11,776,859.17 which is 15.4% more than what was budgeted for. Ms. Pleasant reported Skagit Transit received \$1,230,500.52 in State Grants, which is 40.2% less than planned for and \$1,869,300.00 in Federal Grants which is 43.2% less than planned for. Ms. Pleasant stated grant information would be covered in more detail in Ms. Smith's presentation later in the meeting. Ms. Pleasant reported non-transportation revenue, which includes investment income, insurance recoveries and Skagit Station meeting room rentals was \$153,453.59 which is 256.9% more than budgeted for. Mr. O'Brien noted with the reduction in grants, stated grants are currently very competitive and funds are not as available. Ms. Boudreau inquired if fares and sales tax revenue was designated for operating costs and state and federal grants were mainly for capital expenses. Ms. Pleasant stated the grants discussed covered both operating and capital expenses. Skagit Transit received federal and state grants for both operating and capital projects.

Ms. Pleasant stated 2017 operating expenses for salaries and wages was \$5,784,778.47 with a benefit total of \$4,011,681.77 and these were the two largest expenses for Skagit Transit. Ms. Pleasant stated the cost of benefits was over budget due to more employees signing up for medical benefit adding more spouses and dependents than Skagit Transit expected. Ms. Pleasant stated Skagit Transit spent \$646,554.23 on fuels which was 72.8% of what was budgeted. Ms. Pleasant stated all other expenses were very close to what was budgeted which brought the total comparison of expense to budget to 94.2%.

Ms. Pleasant stated the 2018 budget is 0.1% less than the 2017 budget with fare revenue projected at \$910,000 and a 5% increase in sales tax. Ms. Pleasant stated other revenues are

expected to be \$25,000 in 2018. Ms. Pleasant stated the 2018 operating expense budget increased by 7.6% from 2017. Ms. Pleasant stated the majority of the increases is created by an additional position created in safety and a 7.2-7.6% increase in medical premiums as well as a 2% cost of living adjustment.

Ms. Pleasant stated Skagit Transit has budgeted \$5,438,609 in capital expenses. Ms. Pleasant stated \$4,387,298 has been budgeted for purchasing revenue vehicles (6-fixed route, 10-paratransit, 12-vanpool vans, and 4-engines/transmissions). Ms. Pleasant stated \$140,566 is budgeted for shop equipment (radio upgrade, wireless lift, brake and maintenance system and mower), \$13,700 budgeted for bus shelters, \$30,000 budgeted for new servers in the IT department, and \$867,045 budgeted for design and engineering for the new MOA.

Ms. Janicki stated that in the fixed route ridership chart ridership was up, but the fare revenue is down and asked how this was reconciled. Mr. Windler stated there has been a statewide as well as a national trend for a decline in ridership. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit ridership decreased by 3.5% in 2015, 12.9% in 2016 and 3.9% in 2017 which affects Skagit Transit fare revenue. Mr. Windler stated service changes made in September of 2017 showed an increase in ridership, prior to those changes Skagit Transit was on track for a 9% decline in ridership. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit experienced a reduction in vanpools, which is also included in fare revenue. Ms. Pleasant stated there is an increase in reduced fare ridership, which would increase riders, but revenue would be half of a regular fare. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit has a grant program which donates 10,000 day passes to social service agencies each year, these count as ridership but there is no fare revenues generated from this grant program. Mr. Macdonald stated those day passes allow unlimited rides to the recipients for one day.

Maintenance & Facilities

Mr. Schaner stated all transit agencies are required to develop an FTA TAM plan – Federal Transit Administration Transit Asset Management, which establishes a system that monitors and manages public transportation assets to maximize safety and extend the useful life of equipment. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit's time frame to implement TAM is October 2018. Mr. Schaner stated requirements include, inventory of capital assets, condition assessments, decision support tools, investment prioritization as well as meeting the state of good repair standards. Mr. Schaner stated assets included in the inventory report include, all rolling stock, equipment, infrastructure, facilities and any other equipment with an acquisition cost of \$100,000 or greater. Mr. Schaner stated a useful life benchmark is the length of time and mileage an agency sets forth for each vehicle's usage in its fleet. Mr. Schaner stated the annual asset inventory report is due on or before February 15th.

Mr. Schaner stated the facility performance measures for the MOA, Skagit Station, South Mount Vernon Park and Ride, Chuckanut Park and Ride, Alger Park and Ride, March's Point Park and Ride and the Sedro Woolley Park and Ride are all scored with a series of inspection. Mr. Schaner stated the facilities crew does monthly and quarterly inspections and maintenance on all buildings and vehicles and Skagit Transit meets the FTA guidelines 100%. Mr. Schaner stated a performance measure in 2018 will include updating the HVAC system at Skagit Station, which is estimated to cost \$35,000.

Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit extends the useful life benchmark beyond the guidelines for the FTA minimal useful life to allow more time for budgeting for acquisition of new vehicles. Mr. Schaner stated the useful life benchmark for vanpools is 4 years, 100,000 miles and Skagit Transit's useful life benchmark is 5 years, 125,000 miles. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit has one of the more favored vanpool fleets in the Pacific Northwest, with the current number at 65 vans and a large customer base. Ms. Janicki asked if vanpools are profitable service. Mr. Schaner stated the vanpool breaks even on a monthly basis, and the fluctuation in the number of drivers or groups is correlated with gas prices, as well as Boeing shift changes. Mr. O'Brien stated the vanpool program covers the operating cost of the van, but does not cover the purchase

of the van, those funds come from grants or local money. Mr. Dahlstedt asked the average number of people in the vans. Mr. Schaner stated the seven passenger vans average five members, and the fifteen passenger vans average 12 members. Mr. Dahlstedt stated vanpools take several cars off the roads which has an impact on road improvements. Mr. O'Brien stated the vanpool coordinator, Kyle, will not set up a group without the minimum number of members required. Ms. Hudson asked if there was an equipment reserve fund established that money is added to, so that when replacement of vehicles is necessary, it doesn't impact the general budget. Ms. Pleasant stated Skagit Transit has a capital reserve account which is for the entire organization.

Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit has three 30 foot Nabi coaches not within the useful life benchmark due to engines and transmissions needing to be repowered. Mr. Schaner stated this will happen in 2018 which will bring their condition rating up and within Skagit Transit's USL target. Mr. Schaner stated seven cutaway paratransit coaches will be ordered in July to replace vehicles that have passed, or are soon to pass their useful life benchmark. Mr. Schaner stated he sends staff to inspect new vehicles that have been purchased in order to assure quality of the vehicle prior to taking possession. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit's 2017 vehicle replacement summary consisted of seven new cutaway coaches and four vanpool vans totaling \$924,000.

Mr. Dahlstedt asked how long the chassis in the coaches that are getting engine and transmission replacements will hold out for and how many extra years will these busses last with the repower. Mr. Schaner stated engines would need to be replaced around 350,000 miles, with the repower the coaches should go around 500,000 miles. Mr. Schaner stated the FTA USB for the Nabi coaches is nine years, they will last Skagit Transit twelve years. Mr. Dahlstedt stated a good business strategy for Skagit Transit would be to let people know they are getting the maximum utilization of the buses as well as getting more people off the road. Mr. O'Brien stated the number one bus manufacturer is Gillig and Skagit Transit is working toward having a completely Gillig fleet. Mr. O'Brien stated the reason Skagit Transit has the Nabi coaches was due to a fire at the MOA starting from a Gillig bus, the insurance company was suing them and they refused to sell any of their busses to Skagit Transit for four years.

Mr. Schaner stated all local governments must comply with alternative fuel mandates by July 2018, which Skagit Transit is proactively working toward implementing by transitioning vehicles from ULSD fuel to propane fuel. Mr. Schaner stated transitioning to alternative fuels is very expensive and Skagit Transit is observing how other transit agencies are coping with the changes to learn from other's experiences. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit currently has five propane paratransit vehicles with seven additional on order, and two hybrid gas electric staff vehicles. Mr. Schaner stated all future staff vehicles will be hybrid or electric powered, and as alternatives become available we will migrate to hybrid powered vanpool vehicles. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit is waiting for alternative fuel technology to meet performance requirements for fixed route service. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit would like electric busses that will last the day of service without needing a charge. Mr. Schaner stated other agencies are experimenting with different charging options while busses are on the road. Mr. Schaner stated this is not an option for Skagit Transit as the charging time necessary between runs is far greater than feasible with our routes and schedules. Mr. Schaner stated Gillig is working on an electric bus, currently the charge will last 150-200 miles, whereas in 2020 their hope is to be 250-300 miles on a single charge. Mr. Schaner stated the 660kw vehicles which Gillig has projected to have ready in 2020 would allow Skagit Transit fixed route service to operate a full day on urban routes. Mr. Schaner stated another benefit of working with Gillig in regards to electric busses, is local support for repairs if needed.

Mr. Schaner stated electric charging stations are a part of the design for the MOA2 facility that will be able to handle staff cars and coaches. Mr. Schaner stated the government and Gillig is working on a plug in hybrid electric bus where the diesel engine would kick in and charge the battery when the power level gets low, and at the end of the day when the bus returns, it would be plugged in to charge overnight. Mr. O'Brien stated another challenge is the infrastructure to

put the charging stations on the routes is greater than the cost of the buses. Mr. O'Brien stated Link Transit has eight electric buses that they cannot operate, because if they charge them during the day, it reduces the power in the city of Wenatchee by half. Mr. O'Brien stated this is one of the reasons Skagit Transit wants buses that will sustain enough charge to be in service for the full day, with charging infrastructure already in place at the new base.

Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit's report on the cost per mile of fuel with propane was \$.39 and \$.43 per mile for USLD. Mr. Schaner stated the new propane coaches are quieter, produce less exhaust and are easier to maintain. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit employees are certified to fill propane using a quick disconnect Autogas filler nozzle and neck system. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit currently has a state contract with Blue Star Gas which has a location near Skagit Power Sports, about a mile away from the bus yard. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit is looking into putting a propane filling station on the current property with a \$150 per year lease on the tank and the pump, all Skagit Transit would need to provide would be electricity. Ms. Janicki asked if it made sense to put the propane filling station in at the MOA with plans of moving to the new facility, hopefully sooner than 2020. Mr. Schaner stated that with five to twelve propane vehicles, the service employees spend a great deal of time driving to and from the filling station, also increasing the risk of damage happening to the coaches. Mr. Schaner stated this would be a portable 1,000 gallon tank that will be returned once we move to the new facility at MOA2 which would have a 2,000 gallon propane tank for fueling.

Mr. Dahlstedt stated having the flexibility in the infrastructure to install current charging technology, but be able to adapt to developing technology is what he is interested in. Mr. Dahlstedt stated the county partnered with the city of Mount Vernon to install some infrastructure for charging vehicles and stated looking for partnerships to share the cost of the equipment and get help with funding will be a big help. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit installed three charging stations at Skagit Station and is still waiting on DOT to get signs along I-5 to advertise the charging stations

Information Technology

Mr. Chidley stated the IT department did a substation upgrade to the wiring at Skagit Station to obtain better coverage for the camera system which was completed in phases throughout 2017. Mr. Chidley stated in early 2017 the IT department installed a 18TB DVR, 18 camera positions and 60 camera streams. Mr. Chidley stated in late 2017 the IT department installed an additional 4 cameras and 16 camera streams to cover the blind spots. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department is currently struggling to keep the 30 day retention of video footage and is trying to increase video quality as well as retain the footage as long as necessary. Mr. Chidley stated the wiring done at Skagit Station provides a template for fiber and wireless connected poles for other properties such as the park and rides. Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit has seen an increase in requests for video footage both internally, as well as from outside agencies such as the police department. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department has added camera viewing stations for onsite security and staff, in the customer service office, guard shack and the security supervisor's office. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department has also upgraded the camera system at March's Point, adding six camera positions and 14 camera streams, and connected the surveillance system to the fiber connection at Chuckanut where all the footage is stored. Mr. Chidley stated there is 100% coverage at March's Point and there are now two license plate cameras.

Mr. Chidley stated there are coverage issues with the cameras at Chuckanut Park and Ride, which is currently using 95% of the cameras that were originally installed. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department will use the Skagit Station camera upgrade as a template to improve coverage at Chuckanut, which will create a need for more DVR storage. Mr. Chidley stated one of the license

plate cameras at March's Point would be moved to the entrance of Chuckanut to capture information that would assist in difficult situations.

Mr. Chidley stated the South Mount Vernon Park and Ride was the first location that Skagit Transit upgraded the cameras. Mr. Chidley stated there is currently an issue at this location with cameras going offline due to in-ground copper wire which is being pushed to its limits. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department would like to use the Skagit Station template to upgrade to fiber and wireless feeds. Mr. Chidley stated this would give the option of up to six cameras per pole with 360 degree coverage, and a license plate camera. Mr. Chidley stated this would also add to the need for more DVR storage. Mr. Chidley stated all the footage from the South Mount Vernon Park and Ride is stored at Chuckanut.

Mr. Chidley stated the video surveillance system as a whole experiences cameras going offline due to poorly protected power supplies and copper data connection. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department would like to upgrade Chuckanut and the South Mount Vernon Park and Ride to the Skagit Station template. Mr. Chidley stated this upgrade would also fix the lack of coverage by adding more cameras, which creates a need for more DVR storage for longer retention. Mr. Chidley stated the Skagit Station link to MOA is too slow for full rate video monitoring and Skagit Transit is already in the works with the City of Mount Vernon to get a fiber connection that is large enough to allow the ability to watch and pull videos from Skagit Station to the main office facility. Ms. Boudreau inquired if Skagit Transit currently had a fiber connection and just needed more. Mr. Chidley stated currently Skagit Transit is getting the internet connection from the fiber and is working toward a connection that will not allow anyone else to gain access to.

Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit began a website update in 2017 which would create a mobile friendly version. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department is also working on an online order form for fare card purchase. Mr. Chidley stated the update would include a graphic refresh and an increase in functionality. Mr. Chidley stated features the IT department would like to add would be the ability to see a route, bus location, get an estimate of when the bus will arrive at a certain stop, smart phone app integration and call center integration which will assist the hearing impaired. Mr. Chidley showed a picture of the current website and showed areas of concern. Mr. Chidley then showed a picture of the new website and displayed the ease of usability in comparison, as well as a draft of the fare card order system that will be added to the website. Ms. Boudreau stated when the City of Mount Vernon updated their website to be mobile friendly, they found there to be too much scrolling necessary to use the site. Ms. Boudreau also suggested getting information on the analytics of what people are looking for on the website and to make sure those options were up front and on the main page. Ms. Boudreau asked if Skagit Transit was creating an app as well. Mr. Chidley stated there will not be an app, however the site will be mobile friendly and have a responsive design.

Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit is working on a fiber WAN update with the goals of having 10Gbps fiber links between the major facilities such as the new MOA2, Chuckanut and Skagit Station. Mr. Chidley stated 1Gbps fiber links would branch off of those main facilities to the other locations such as March's Point, Alger, the current MOA, South Mount Vernon Park and Ride and the remote office on Pine St. Mr. Chidley stated the finished project will have a hard fiber connection and all the equipment would belong to Skagit Transit. Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit has the 10Gbps switches that will go out to Chuckanut, MOA2, Skagit Station and City of Burlington, which is helping supply space for a location for all of the fiber to connect together. Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit is working with City of Mount Vernon on a fiber connection for a savings of about \$100 a month. Mr. Chidley stated installation at South Mount Vernon is in progress and we are currently waiting on PSE permitting. Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit is also working with the City of Burlington, the fiber is installed at Chuckanut however the ends have not been terminated on those fibers. Mr. Chidley stated they have tried three different ways to get fiber at the new MOA2, the first being a direct line to the Port of Skagit which failed as they cannot contract out. Mr. Chidley stated State Legislature denied The Port the ability to sell the fiber network. Mr. Chidley stated a direct connection with an ISP failed due to an inability to

coordinate installation costs with the Port of Skagit in proper timing. Mr. Chidley stated the third attempt was with the City of Burlington which failed as the new building is outside the city limits. Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit's plan is to go out for bid with ISP's again, this time allowing for proper time to coordinate installation costs with the Port of Skagit.

Ms. Janicki stated the 2018 capital budget for the IT department is 30,000 and that doesn't seem to be enough to cover the costs of what IT is asking for. Mr. Chidley stated some of the items he had discussed have already been started and are continuous work, others are planned for 2019.

Mr. Chidley stated Skagit Transit has a multi-layer protection with internet firewall anti-virus, application and web filter, Barracuda spam email filter, VIPRE business premium workstation and email anti-virus as well as the Windows built-in firewall. Mr. Chidley stated the IT department has been doing anti-phishing training with employees using a program called "Knowb4".

Mr. Chidley showed a video of an incident caught on camera at Chuckanut Park and Ride where two individuals were using a blow torch while breaking into a vehicle, caught it on fire, and then catching the next car on fire as well.

Wellness Committee

Wellness Program and Grant Coordinator, Marcy Smith, presented proposed changes to the Wellness Program Policy in an effort to update the current policy to better reflect the current program needs.

Ms. Smith reported the current policy was developed and approved in 2014 and set into place before the program began, the proposed changes are areas where the program could improve/change to try to encourage more participation. The slideshow started with reviewing the elements of the current policy; (Slide 2) which included the purpose, mission and goals, administration, participation, program elements including the Health Club Reimbursement Program details, maximum monthly reimbursement, eligibility and attendance requirements. The policy also includes the Wellness Committee general requirements, composition, member expectations and program annual expectations. Ms. Smith then reviewed the proposed policy explaining what will remain in the policy from the current policy and what the changes would be. Ms. Smith reported the elements remaining in the policy are the Programs purpose mission and goals administration and participation requirements. Ms. Smith then reviewed the proposed changes (slide 3). Changes made to the Health Club Reimbursement Program will include renaming the program to the Wellness Activity Reimbursement Program. The new program maintains the current program maximum annual reimbursement per employee and opens up the activities allowable for reimbursement. Ms. Smith reported there is also a reference to a separate governing document describing the eligibility, attendance requirements and reimbursable activities. Another change is the removal of the details on the Wellness Committee composition and general requirements information. This section will be replaced with a statement about the Committee and a reference to a governing document for Wellness Committee General Requirements. Ms. Smith added these requirements are set forth by the sponsor of our Health Benefit Plan, AWC. If AWC makes any changes to the requirements, staff will inform the Board and update the document. The presentation went on to describe the proposed Wellness Committee General Requirements Document (Slide 4) noting what program elements are remaining the same and what changes are proposed. Ms. Smith reported the elements remaining the same for the Committee are the general requirements, member expectations and annual program requirements. The proposed changes to the Committee are the general staffing requirements; instead of stating the committee will be nine (9) members (volunteers are hard to come by) the committee composition will state a maximum of nine (9) members and a minimum of three (3) members. Removal of the permanent staff member due to difficulty getting volunteers for the Committee and the Coordinator expectations will now include the permanent staff expectations.

Ms. Smith went on to report on the proposed Wellness Activity Reimbursement Program (Slide 5) which will replace the Health Club Reimbursement Program. Ms. Smith reported the program will retain the same agency financial commitment of \$360 per employee per year and eligibility requirements for participating in the program. Ms. Smith reviewed the eligible activities and maximum reimbursements for the program which include \$30 per month toward monthly fitness membership fees with required minimum attendance, 50% reimbursement of registration fees for Wellness Activity classes/lessons, sports league fees, health/wellness and holistic education classes and fitness equipment purchases. Ms. Smith then reviewed the details of the eligible activities, submittal requirements and reimbursements detailed in the Wellness Activities Program Document. Mayor Boudreau asked about how the different reimbursements work, Ms. Smith asked everyone to refer to the Wellness Activity Reimbursement Document in their packet which shows the allowable activities and maximum reimbursements for each eligible activity and the submittal requirements explaining the maximum reimbursements in a six month period is \$180 or 360 for the entire year. Ms. Smith also added employees could do a variety of activities, however their reimbursement will never exceed the maximum amount allowed. Ms. Boudreau asked if mental health classes are included, Ms. Smith stated that yes it is an eligible reimbursable activity.

Ms. Smith continued with review of new policies. The first policy presented was the Employee Wellness Day-Off Policy, (Slide 6) it was explained that this would not be an additional expense as the employee would exchange the day off in lieu of receiving the maximum reimbursement from participating in wellness activities. Ms. Janicki asked how granting an employee a day off would not affect the budget when replacing the employee taking the day off would cost the agency in additional wages for the employee who is now covering the employee who has taken the day off. Ms. Roodzant explained that since we are not increasing service hours the budget would already include the hours the replacement employee would be working in the operator's budget and the employee taking the day off would be paid out of the wellness budget which includes the funding necessary for maximum reimbursement under the Wellness Activity. Mr. Dahlstedt stated that both were budgeted one under the operations budget and the other under the wellness budget.

There was a short discussion about the policy's goal is to assist employees to work toward health and well-being. Ms. Smith noted the current participation rate in the Health Club Reimbursement program is low and the goal to adding more activities eligible for reimbursement is to get more employees active and involved in their health. Ms. Boudreau stated that she likes the idea of offering more activities to be reimbursed in an effort to meet the employee's differences in what they like to be active in. Ms. Boudreau did not agree that an additional day off was a good idea based on this criteria.

Ms. Smith continued with a review of the Wellness Committee Wellness Day-Off Policy. (Slide 7) Ms. Smith explained that the Wellness Committee is a very active committee where members are leading or assisting in many activities throughout the year all of which is done in addition to their regular job duties. Ms. Smith noted the Committee member must earn this day off, it is an award for members who meet or exceed general committee expectations and to assist in recruitment and balancing work among the members. Ms. Smith then explained to be eligible for the reward, within a calendar year the member must attend 10 of 12 meetings, lead one activity, assist in the administration of two wellness program sponsored activities, and participate in four activities sponsored by the Committee. Ms. Smith reported the conditions Members must meet for the Wellness Day Off are that they must request the day off the following calendar year after completing one year on the committee and meeting the requirements, and they must request the day off 30 days in advance and have supervisor approval. The day off is not eligible for cash out for any reason and doesn't not transfer into the following year (use or lose status). Ms. Janicki asked about the changes from when the first time this information was presented. Ms. Smith stated the original submission presented at the January Board meeting included removing both the Fitness Reimbursement Program and Wellness Committee General Requirements and after the feedback from the Board revised removing the Reimbursement Program leaving it in the

policy and adding a reference to the details of the program in a separate document. This program was left in the policy due to the funding tie. The information presented at the retreat did evolve from when the packet was first presented to the Board at the January Board of Directors Meeting.

Ms. Smith reviewed the Healthy Meeting Policy (Slide 8) Ms. Smith reported the policy would govern whenever Skagit Transit funds are used for food purchases for meetings and would require healthy food options which included water, non-sugary drinks, at least one fruit or vegetable and a healthy food alternative in addition to dessert. Ms. Smith also reported the policy would also include scheduled breaks in meetings lasting longer than one hour and consideration of a walking meeting when three or less attendees are invited.

Ms. Smith asked for feedback from the Board concerning the subjects of the presentation. (Slide 9) Ms. Boudreau stated that she did not agree with the employee wellness day off based on the criteria that was presented, however Ms. Boudreau did agree with the Wellness Committee Day-Off as it was earned and offered as an award. Ms. Boudreau also stated that she would like to see a report showing how this program improved participation and how it correlates with reduction in claims. Ms. Smith explained that Skagit Transit has been relying on the reports provided to the agency which is the results of the health assessments the employees participate in. The report gives aggregated data on our population and identifies the health risks based on their answers. Skagit Transit is able to see changes in the health risks based on this report. Ms. Roodzant stated that we can't get claims data because it goes to AWC. Ms. Boudreau stated that we should be able to prove the benefit is a benefit and not just an entitlement. Ms. Roodzant stated that we recently started logging disruptions (people who call out), we may be able to use that information to gauge if the program is having a positive effect on the well-being of the employees. We may be able to tie any increase in participation to a drop in call outs, it is difficult to get metrics for wellness. Ms. Boudreau stated she would like to see some data on how this is making a positive effect. Ms. Smith directed the group to look at the 2014-2017 data collected on participation of the current reimbursement program provided in the packet stating that we can use the 2017 participation data to compare to 2018 data to see if the changes made any increases in participation. Mr. Dahlsedt stated the Employees Wellness Day Off should have criteria such as quitting smoking or other health benefiting criteria that incentivize employees to earn the day off rather than just give it to them in exchange for reimbursements; a reward rather than an entitlement.

Grants

Ms. Smith stated grants received that support operating assistance are broken into three categories, state funding, federal funding and local funding. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit received \$428,178 in state funding which encompasses paratransit service, 80X weekend service expansion, and 90X mid-day and weekend service. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit received \$1,940,071 in federal funding, which supports the mobility specialist position, fixed route and para transit service assistance, 90X operating assistance and 40X expansion of mid-day service. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit received \$3,000 in local funding from a safety grant from WSTIP and an AWC Wellness mini grant.

Ms. Smith stated in regards to capital assistance Skagit Transit received \$757,200 in state funding which purchased five propane paratransit vehicles and ten van pool vehicles. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit received \$1,690,747 in federal funding for forty foot commuter style coach, the MOA2 design and engineering, vehicle purchase, fifteen passenger replacement vans, and replacement propane paratransit vehicles. Ms. Smith stated that the total grant funds received in 2018 totaled \$4,819,196.

Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit has an application pending for FTA 5339 for the MOA 2 construction with a request for \$11 million. Mr. Dahlstedt inquired who awards this grant. Ms. Smith stated the FTA has a grant review panel that will score the applicants. Mr. Dahlstedt inquired if letters from the members of the Board would help Skagit Transit receive this grant. Ms.

Smith stated Skagit Transit has the support of the cities, commissioners, Rick Larsen and Patty Murray.

Ms. Smith stated the upcoming funding opportunities would be 2018 FTA 5339 if Skagit Transit were not receive the 2017 FTA 5339. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit has requested \$1.7 million for 5 commuter coaches through the Regional Mobility Grant, and there are opportunities for operating and capital projects through the Consolidated Grant Program that would benefit the special needs population. Mr. Dahlstedt inquired if this grant would cover purchase of more paratransit vehicles. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit currently has the vehicles necessary, but the funding would be used to pay drivers. Mr. Macdonald stated in January Skagit Transit saw an increase of 460 paratransit riders compared to last year and an increase of 393 paratransit passengers in February in comparison to the previous year. Mr. O'Brien stated there is also a large increase in requests for applications for the paratransit service.

Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit runs the Ride Pass Grant Program which was approved by the Board in 2014 to distribute 10,000 one day passes annually to local 501(c)3 non-profit organizations. Ms. Smith stated these passes go to agencies that assist clients with transportation to access jobs, social services or medical services. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit awarded 29 agencies in 2018 and the requests and applications for assistance is growing. Ms. Smith stated in the past two years the request for passes have exceeded 13,500 and applications submitted has tripled since the program started. Ms. Smith stated the staff recommends consideration of increasing the number of one-day passes from 10,000 to 14,000 for the program beginning in 2019. Ms. Smith stated Skagit Transit drivers have reported that since the start of this program they are seeing a significant difference in the number of requests for free rides, which reduces the drivers exposure to fare disputes which may pose safety risks. Ms. Boudreau inquired if Skagit Transit knew if all the passes given to the agencies were handed out and used. Ms. Smith stated the agencies report to her twice a year, as well as a mid-year review to see if agencies feel they will have more than needed so the passes may be re-distributed to eliminate waste.

Planning Service Development

Mr. Windler stated the interest in hiring a consulting team to develop a strategic plan has been decided against as the cost is near \$150,000 and instead Skagit Transit will develop a short term strategic plan for the following three to five years that will create a prioritized list of service improvements. Mr. Windler stated this plan would asses Skagit Transit's recent performance as well as have a public outreach for feedback. Mr. Windler stated the timeline for the strategic plan is divided into steps including, February through April for internal meetings and preparing service options, in May and June conducting surveys and public outreach, and in July and August drafting a final report and presenting the findings. Mr. Windler stated the earliest this plan would be implemented would be 2019.

Mr. Windler stated he will use the Remix software that Skagit Transit purchased with the Board's approval that highlights snow routes, flooding concerns and different demographics as well as areas of service, to address areas in the county that will be considered for changes with this strategic plan. Mr. Windler stated he will discuss routes 185/195, 750, 409, 410, 615, 300's, 207, 204 and 305.

Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit is putting forth a recommendation to eliminate route 750 which provides service from Concrete to Marblemount once a week on Friday's. Mr. Windler stated there has been a significant ridership decrease on this route, as riders in this area have moved away. Mr. Windler stated the cost per ride on route 750 in February was \$119 per ride compared to the average cost per ride which is \$7.72. Mr. Winder stated cancelling route 750 would

eliminate the possibility for paratransit service in that area, however there are no paratransit clients at this time, so there would be no impact to anyone in regards to paratransit service. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit is planning on reinvesting the funds that have been used for the route 750 for routes 185/195 to increase from three days a week to five days a week, as well as go from six runs a day to as many as 12 runs a day. Mr. Windler stated this change would nearly double the budget for rural service. Mr. Windler stated the 185/195 serves the West part of Burlington as well as the Bow area and there is a larger population in this area and would improve ridership. Ms. Janicki stated she understands dropping route 750 service, but does not understand increasing the 185/195 route service when it doubles the cost. Mr. Windler stated there is a population in that area however it is underserved and not regular service hours at this time which is keeping those people from riding. Mr. O'Brien stated this route also goes through Burlington and would help the 300 route that goes to Sedro Woolley by shortening that route and providing faster service. Ms. Boudreau inquired if there had been prior service to the Bow area. Mr. O'Brien stated there was previously a flex route that serviced that location. Ms. Smith stated the consolidated grant program has 5311 funds for rural areas that could assist adding service to this route. Ms. Boudreau stated it would be nice to be able to have a map of the area and the route that shows areas of opportunity for ridership. Mr. O'Brien stated the Remix software Skagit Transit purchased with the Board's approval does just that and will be showed in a few moments.

Mr. Windler stated the Remix software is used to develop a proposed service schedule, and an estimate of service hours. Mr. Windler displayed the program and demonstrated several routes and potential changes based on population demographics and jobs in the area. Mr. Windler stated this program allows Skagit Transit to match the service to the goals and the population that need transit service. Mr. Windler stated this program allows Skagit Transit to consider minority populations, youth, senior citizens, car free populations, low income areas, limited English and disabled communities. Mr. Windler added that this program also shows elevation which helps when considering snow routes and flooding concerns.

Mr. Windler showed potential route changes to the 185/195 that would alleviate the 300 improving service to Sedro Woolley. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit has received numerous requests for circulator routes in the Sedro Woolley area. Mr. Windler showed a potential change of separating the 300 routes, where one route would perform a loop through town and the other would connect Burlington and Sedro Woolley eliminating the 20 minute lay over at Job Corps, increases service to more Sedro Woolley businesses, apartment complexes, the senior center, the new library and the alternative high school. Mr. Windler stated there is a large potential for ridership increase, and this proposal would go to the public for feedback on these changes. Mr. O'Brien stated with current routes it takes an hour and a half to get from Sedro Woolley to Mount Vernon. Mr. Windler the showed a limited stop service between Sedro Woolley, Chuckanut and Skagit Station that would allow quicker connections and eliminate transfers. Mr. Windler stated the current 305 route makes one direct trip from Mount Vernon to Sedro Woolley, and that is the best performing run, showing a demand for service in that area. Mr. Windler stated the Swinomish Tribe now has a new medical facility and has requested more service on the 615 route which they plan to try and fund with a tribal grant. Mr. Windler stated the current 409 route in Anacortes is a poor performing route with its last run at 4:45 in the afternoon. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit would like to add service hours to this route to accommodate people commuting to and from work. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit would like to do a similar tweak to the 410 route and add service. Mr. Windler stated better bus service is needed in East Mount Vernon with route 204 which has high performance, but is chronically late due to high ridership and frequent stopping. Mr. Windler stated this is a 30 minute route that is often taking 28-32 minutes which puts the driver under constant stress creating a morale and safety issue. Mr. Windler showed options for changes to the 204 route that Skagit Transit would like to consider, the first would take the route from a 30 minute route to a 60 minute route, allowing better service to East Mount Vernon. Mr. Windler stated the 305 that currently runs through East Mount Vernon starts late and ends early, this proposed option for the 204 would start earlier and end later as well as service more areas, add evening service to the college and eliminate the need for transfers to get to down town Mount Vernon. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit would like to add a second 204 so that service would

occur every 30 minutes. Mr. Windler stated this would allow Skagit Transit to change the 305, turning it at Clear Lake to service North Mount Vernon and eliminate the issues faced with the narrow bridge on Highway 9. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit would like to propose a change to the 207 route, making it a 60 minute route instead of 45 minutes making the schedule more consistent, redirecting the route to avoid several unprotected left turns, accommodate service to the new YMCA, and allow quick service in and out of Walmart. Ms. Boudreau inquired if public feedback would be solicited regarding these potential changes. Mr. Windler stated these changes would be put out to the public for feedback.

Mr. Windler discussed the cost of these potential changes and noted the cost of increasing service on the 615 would not be included as the funding would come from the tribe. Mr. Windler also stated if route 750 was eliminated, the bus used for that route would be used for the increased service and noted that the acquisition of a bus for that route would already be attained. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit has the physical assets necessary to make these proposed service changes. Mr. Windler stated the challenge would be hiring and training drivers.

Mr. Windler stated 2017 saw a 3.9% ridership decline, however prior to service changes in September, Skagit Transit was on track for an 8.5-9% decline in service. Mr. Windler stated 2016 was a 12.9% decline compared to 2015, which prompted necessary changes to service. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit ridership is currently up 7.3% YTD over 2017. Mr. Windler stated projections show Skagit Transit will have positive growth on an annual basis. Mr. Windler stated Skagit Transit expects the proposed changes along with public feedback to help increase ridership as well. Mr. Dahlstedt stated servicing senior centers, YMCA, churches, hospitals, and libraries and other key locations, as well as marketing to baby boomers that will be retiring soon will help with increasing ridership.

Personnel and Staffing

Mr. O'Brien stated in the interest of time he will verbally state the needs of each department. Mr. O'Brien stated in the executive department, approved by the Board, Skagit Transit will hire a safety supervisor. Mr. O'Brien stated there is no need for additional staffing in the administration or Maintenance department, however the IT department is in need of another individual to keep up with demand, if not by this fall, then by 2019. Mr. Macdonald stated the operations department has grown and experienced increases in service. Mr. Macdonald stated there are currently 105 employees in operations and the ratio of employees to supervisors is 19.8:1. Mr. Macdonald stated WSTIP standards for direct reports to supervisors is 12:1. Mr. Macdonald stated Skagit Transit is proposing to transition the two operations support assistants to road supervisors which would bring the ratio of direct reports to supervisors to 14:1. Mr. Macdonald stated this position would be an exempt position on pay scale 8. Mr. Macdonald stated in addition to their regular duties, road supervisors would now perform evaluations, corrective action and supervisory decisions. Ms. Boudreau clarified that this is shifting two operations support personnel into road supervisors. Mr. O'Brien confirmed that and stated the positions are not operations supervisors as supervisors are at pay scale 11, road supervisors will be at pay scale 8. Ms. Boudreau inquired what the fiscal impact would be with this shift. Ms. Roodzant stated it would be a \$10,000 impact per employee. Mr. Macdonald stated hiring a new supervisor would cost approximately \$60,000 plus tax.

Ms. Janicki inquired if a van shown in the presentation for road supervisors was hybrid or diesel fueled. Mr. Schaner stated the vehicle shown is a hybrid. Mr. O'Brien stated there is little to no office space at Skagit Transit MOA, and this van would be a mobile office for road supervisors with the ability to respond to all types of calls on the road. Mr. O'Brien stated the new MOA is farther away and supervisors need to be able to respond quickly. Mr. Schaner stated these vehicles have a lift and can accommodate two wheel chairs or hold five passengers. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit will only ask to purchase one van as road supervisors work opposite shifts and will share the vehicle. Ms. Boudreau asked where the \$20,000 budget impact would be coming from. Mr. O'Brien stated the money would come from the undesignated reserves. Mr.

O'Brien stated Skagit Transit is not asking for this vehicle at this time, it is simply being shared so the Board knows it will be coming up later.

Mr. O'Brien stated the GFI fare machines are a large area of concern for Skagit Transit. Mr. Schaner stated there 135 road calls and 168 work order repairs in 2016, and in 2017 with the help of the operations support personnel there were 59 road calls and 148 work order repairs. Mr. Schaner stated 2016 shop cost in support of GFIs was \$68,481.59 and \$66,842.58 in 2017. Mr. Schaner stated GFIs are very maintenance heavy pieces of equipment and each unit costs approximately \$18,000. Mr. O'Brien stated he would like to bring to the Board a suggestion of electronic fares where passengers can load funds onto their phones. Mr. O'Brien stated this would eliminate the road calls and GFIs. Mr. O'Brien stated transit agencies are moving toward cashless fares. Mr. Macdonald added this would increase on time performance. Mr. Chidley stated he is looking into an account base system where funds can be loaded online, on their phone or in person at customer service locations. Ms. Hudson inquired how this would affect the free passes given in the grant pass program. Mr. Chidley stated those passes could still be passed out with an RFID chip so that the pass can still be validated. Ms. Boudreau inquired when Skagit Transit got the GFIs. Mr. Macdonald confirmed they were purchased in 2005. Mr. O'Brien stated the customer service level with GFIs is terrible. Mr. Chidley stated the last POS machine purchased from GFI for \$18,000 did not work out of the box. Mr. O'Brien stated this is a direction Skagit Transit wants to start considering in the future. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit may consider a fall retreat to further discuss electronic fares. Mr. O'Brien stated an FTA audit questioned Skagit Transit's reasoning for not charging a fare on paratransit service. Mr. O'Brien stated if we charge a fare for paratransit, and offer free fixed route service to paratransit eligible clients it will increase fixed route ridership and help alleviate the demand for paratransit. Mr. O'Brien stated clients can also use the travel trainer and mobility specialist to increase ability to ride fixed route. Ms. Janicki inquired if the high demand for paratransit service was why there was an increase in denials. Mr. Dahlstedt inquired who was pressing this change. Mr. O'Brien stated an FTA audit is recommending charging a fare on the paratransit service. Mr. Dahlstedt inquired if Island Transit is still currently fare free. Mr. O'Brien stated Island Transit is in the process of charging a fare for both fixed route and paratransit services. Mr. Windler stated the incentive of offering a free ride on fixed route is cheaper for Skagit Transit with the average paratransit ride costing \$61 per trip as opposed to \$7.73 per trip on fixed route. Ms. Janicki asked if Skagit Transit would bring a proposal and fare structure to the Board. Mr. O'Brien stated they would.

Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Chidley to show a video of a vape/e-cigarette that blew up on an Island Transit bus. Mr. O'Brien stated they would like to bring a no smoking on Skagit Transit properties policy to the Board for the safety of passengers as well as employees. Mr. O'Brien stated a short fall retreat may be necessary to cover the rest of what is needed. Mr. Dahlstedt thank Skagit Transit employees for the hard work on the presentations.

Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt adjourned the meeting at 2:14 p.m.

Ken Dahlstedt, Chair
Skagit Transit Board of Directors

Attest:

Whitney Fernandes
Clerk of Skagit Transit